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1JOHN

You Asked for It

1 John 5:14-21

1Jn 5:14-21 Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. (15) And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him. (16) If anyone sees his brother sinning a sin which does not lead to death, he will ask, and He will give him life for those who commit sin not leading to death. There is sin leading to death. I do not say that he should pray about that. (17) All unrighteousness is sin, and there is sin not leading to death. (18) We know that whoever is born of God does not sin; but he who has been born of God keeps himself, and the wicked one does not touch him. (19) We know that we are of God, and the whole world lies under the sway of the wicked one. (20) And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us an understanding, that we may know Him who is true; and we are in Him who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life. (21) Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Amen.

I. John Closes His First Letter

- a. John's greatest desire for this 3rd generation church was that they would see Jesus, that they would experience Him for themselves
 - i. That they would be transformed by His presence – greater confidence in Him, growing desire to be led by Him, and deeper love for people
 - 1. That is the assurance we are given that we are children of God – faith, obedience, and love
 - ii. That was the heart of the apostles – born out of their personal relationships with their King - *Php 3:7-12 But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ. (8) Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ (9) and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith; (10) that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death, (11) if, by any means, I may attain to the resurrection from the dead. (12) Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me.*
 - iii. Can't even begin down this road until we've become born again

II. Ask Anything According

- a. Assurance to Confidence
 - i. *Now this is the confidence* - more than an assurance of being right - Boldness in approaching God
 - 1. Difference - one is horizontal, and one is vertical
 - 2. I know I'm right vs seeking Him who is righteous

3. *1 John 2:28 And now, little children, abide in Him, that when He appears, we may have confidence and not be ashamed before Him at His coming.*
- b. What are we confident in?
 - i. *1Jn 5:(14) Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. (15) And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him.*
 - ii. Verse that preachers and authors who peddle a false prosperity gospel love to quote – ignoring the context (also well meaning believers)
 - iii. Some of the bestselling Christian books of the last 20 years...
 1. Prayer of Jabez – based on 2 verses in *1Ch 4:10 And Jabez called on the God of Israel saying, "Oh, that You would bless me indeed, and enlarge my territory, that Your hand would be with me, and that You would keep me from evil, that I may not cause pain!" So God granted him what he requested.*
 - a. God is eager to grant material prosperity and expanded influence if people simply pray in a certain way
 - b. "I want to teach you how to pray a daring prayer that God always answers. It is brief, only one sentence with four parts, and tucked away in the Bible, but I believe it contains the key to a life of extraordinary favor with God..."
 - c. Misunderstanding or ignoring the difference between Descriptive vs Prescriptive scriptures – turns a relationship with God into a formula for blessing
 - d. Sold 11 million copies
 2. The Circle Maker – the author went outside the Bible to the Talmud (collection of Jewish civil and ceremonial laws and legends)
 - a. One of the legends speaks of a man who, during a drought, drew a circle and told God he wasn't leaving the circle until God gave them rain.
 - b. The author instructs Christians to draw circles or walk circles or imagine circles around anything they want, and God will have to give them it to them
 3. Your Best Life Now – Joel's best seller – God wants your life to be easy and comfortable, God wants you to experience all the finest things that this life has to offer
 - a. 7 step plan – self-esteem, self-empowerment, mixed with the prosperity gospel
 - b. His Good News – we can have all we want and desire in this life
 - c. Board game – one card has you look in a mirror a say affirming things about yourself
 - iv. Why did these books sell millions of copies? They capitalized on the greed that lives in all our hearts, while making our fleshly pursuits seem Spiritual.
 1. Christian pop culture is telling us to do the very thing God despises – Hold on to this life, love your life, love the things of the world – Jesus is calling us to a life of self-denial, laying down our lives, decreasing so that He may increase
 2. Isn't this how Jesus taught us to pray?

- a. ***Mark 11:22 So Jesus answered and said to them, “Have faith in God. 23 For assuredly, I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, ‘Be removed and be cast into the sea,’ and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that those things he says will be done, he will have whatever he says. 24 Therefore I say to you, whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you will have them.***
 - c. Qualification in verse 14 - we ask according to His will
 - i. When Jesus’ taught on prayer, he emphasized surrender to God’s will (Matthew 6:10) and seeking God’s kingdom (Matthew 6:33)
 - 1. Prayer is not imposing our will on God, but surrendering our will to His
 - 2. *Every true prayer is a variation of Christ’s prayer ‘your will be done’. John Stott*
 - a. Jesus taught us this in the Lord’s Prayer (Your Kingdom come, Your will be done), and then exemplified it in the Garden of Gethsemane
 - 3. We have this confidence – we know this to be true – if we ask ANYTHING ACCORDING to His will, He hears us. And whatever we ask, we will have what we asked of Him.
 - 4. According to His will – you can see why it is imperative that we know His will which He has made clear in His Word
 - a. ***John 9:31 Now we know that God does not hear sinners; but if anyone is a worshiper of God and does His will, He hears him.***
 - ii. In the very next verse, we see where John is going with this - If anyone sees his brother sinning a sin which does not lead to death, he will ask, and He will give him life
 - 1. Isn’t it so like us to take a verse that has to do with our role in blessing our brother and making it about ourselves? John is talking about the personal role we play in the work of sanctifying our brother.
 - a. When we apply a self-centered lens to this verse we completely miss the power behind it – we are left frustrated – our faith becomes contingent on the blessings of that day
 - 2. ***James 4:1 Where do wars and fights come from among you? Do they not come from your desires for pleasure that war in your members? 2 You lust and do not have. You murder and covet and cannot obtain. You fight and war. Yet you do not have because you do not ask. 3 You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss, that you may spend it on your pleasures.***

(16) If anyone sees his brother sinning a sin which does not lead to death, he will ask, and He will give him life for those who commit sin not leading to death. There is sin leading to death. I do not say that he should pray about that. (17) All unrighteousness is sin, and there is sin not leading to death. (18) We know that whoever is born of God does not sin; but he who has been born of God keeps himself, and the wicked one does not touch him.

III. The Forgiven Sin

- a. We will get to the questions you all have – but first - He will ask - the Christian’s inevitable and spontaneous reaction.
 - i. Remember – this is about transformation – this is about our new identity in Christ – qualities of the Kingdom of God – victory over the world

- ii. Our natural inclination becomes the good of others and the glory of God -
- b. What is a sin that does not lead to death? What happens when we pray for this brother? What is a sin that leads to death? Why shouldn't we pray for that sin?
 - i. Remember these verses do not live in a vacuum. The best commentary on the Bible is the Bible – when you come across something you don't know fall back on what you do.
- c. What is a sin that does not lead to death?
 - i. Romans 6 tells us that the wages of sin is death – and then underneath that verse in fine print is a list of sins that don't lead to death...right? Of course not.
 - ii. John makes sure there's no misunderstanding here - All unrighteousness is sin, but then repeats and there is sin not leading to death.
 - 1. All sin is paid a wage – we've earned it – we can't decline to receive it – we can't do the work of unrighteousness pro bono – every man and woman will receive their wages
 - 2. Interesting viewing judgment and punishment like this, wages are usually a good thing but how many of us have heard our moms say “you've just earned yourself a week of no TV? What? Want to make it 2 weeks??”
 - 3. And then we get mad at mom and dad but it was our actions that earned the punishment – they didn't wake up one morning and start dishing out punishments for fun like Oprah
 - 4. Every sin earns the wage of death, unless someone stands in and receives those wages for them
- d. What sin doesn't lead to death? The forgiven sin. The sin that was nailed to the cross of Christ. The sin that has been bought and paid for by His blood.
 - i. ***Col 2:13-14 And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses, (14) having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross.***
 - ii. When you see a brother missing the mark, missing Jesus, start praying for them. The Holy Spirit is working in them. They have a new heart, they are a new creation, intercede for them and God will give them life – God will bring about Spiritual fruit in them.
 - 1. True, 'life' to John means communion with God, and the sinning Christian cannot enjoy fellowship with God
 - 2. God may lead you to talk to them, to disciple them, to encourage them, to exhort them – how will we know? Prayer!
 - 3. We are never effective ministering from a place of frustration
 - 4. This principle starts in the home – husbands, wives, children – we get to be a part of helping each other see Jesus
- e. What is the sin that leads to death?
 - i. The unforgiven sin, the sin that has not been covered by the precious blood of Jesus
 - 1. Some commentators disagree – they believe this to mean sins that lead to physical death, but I personally don't see this supported in scripture
 - 2. I believe John is saying we shouldn't pray for the sanctification of an unbeliever because they don't have the Holy Spirit – their primary need is Jesus – any change in behavior is only superficial

- a. Praying that they show others more love is an empty prayer until the author of love has transformed their hearts

(19) We know that we are of God, and the whole world lies under the sway of the wicked one. (20) And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us an understanding, that we may know Him who is true; and we are in Him who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life.

IV. We Know

- a. Fall back on what you know – What do we know:
 - i. We know whoever is born of God does not sin; but he who has been born of God keeps himself, and the wicked one does not touch him.
 1. the verb is present and ‘implies continuity, habit, permanence’ – A child of God does not persist in it habitually or ‘live in sin’
 2. The true child of God will never live in harmony with sin
 3. They may occasionally meet; they cannot live together
 - ii. We know that we are of God, and the whole world lies under the sway of the wicked one.
 1. Who’s behind the scenes
 2. The whole world lies under the sway of the wicked one, the whole world lies in the power of the evil one.
 3. Sway, to lie outstretched in the arms of the evil one.
 - a. J Vernon has a sermon entitled "When the Devil Puts the Baby to Sleep" - The Devil is saying to the church, "Sh-h-h. You're waking people up, and we don't want to do that! They are very comfortable. Many people in churches are dead in trespasses and sins, and we don't want to wake them up. Let's leave them alone." The Devil is concerned when people are awakened.
 - b. Our society is made up of people gently rocked to sleep by the lies of the evil one
 - i. And we forget that we are the foreigners in this land, we are the aliens, we are the pilgrims
 4. How do I know we have forgotten this? Because I still say and hear things like...
 - a. Can you believe what they are teaching in classrooms?
 - b. Can you believe what this congressman did?
 - c. Can you believe this piece of legislation?
 - i. Yes!
 - d. This world is under the influence of satan – why are we surprised when they act like their father? We should be more surprised if anything good comes from the world.
 - iii. We know that the Son of God has come and has given us an understanding, that we may know Him who is true; and we are in Him who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life.
 1. ***Col 1:13-14 He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love, (14) in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins.***

2. *Eph 2:1-3 And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins, (2) in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, (3) among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others.*

b. P.S. *1Jn 5:21 Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Amen.*

i. Brothers and sisters, satan can't damn you but he can distract you – you've found satisfaction in Jesus don't take your eyes of Him and look for satisfaction elsewhere